



STATE OF NEVADA
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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PRESS RELEASE

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NDEP UNVEILS THE NEVADA MERCURY AIR EMISSIONS CONTROL PROGRAM

CARSON CITY—Today the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection officially launched the Nevada Mercury Air Emissions Control Program for precious metal mining operations.

NDEP evaluated the former Voluntary Mercury Reduction Program and, with stakeholder involvement, proposed enhancements and control mechanisms to build on the success of that program.

"The Nevada Mercury Air Emissions Control Program is the first regulatory program of its kind to control mercury emissions from precious metal mining," NDEP Administrator Leo Drozdoff said. "The program takes the control of mercury emissions from precious metals mining to a new level. Our ability to develop a regulatory program of this magnitude and on an aggressive schedule would not be possible without the cooperation of the regulated industry as well as the stakeholders who expressed their concerns regarding the outcome of the program."

The newly proposed regulatory program varies significantly from the voluntary program. Most significantly, the regulatory program is a State of Nevada regulatory program. The program also differs from the voluntary program by requiring enhanced monitoring, testing, recordkeeping and reporting; expanded coverage to all precious metal mining operations; a requirement for improved and additional controls; and unit level applicability rather than by facility.

While a federal standard for mercury air emissions from metal mining operations has never been set, in 2002 the NDEP along with the US Environmental Protection Agency, developed a voluntary program to reduce mercury air emissions from four major gold mining operations. According to EPA, the most recent report indicates annual mercury air emissions are at 3,755 pounds, a reduction of 17,343 pounds from the program's 2001 baseline emissions of 21,098 pounds.

"Nevada's voluntary program with the mining industry was remarkable in that it reduced emissions in advance of any formal regulatory framework," said Wayne Nastri, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Pacific Southwest Office. "We believe the new program will build on those earlier successes to further reduce mercury emissions."

While it's well known that the Western United States is affected by mercury from long range and regional sources, NDEP remains focused on its goal to control mercury air emissions and to minimize impacts to the environment through this regulatory program.

"The Nevada Mercury Air Emissions Control Program addresses an area that we at NDEP can control—regulation of mercury air emissions from thermal units at precious metal mining operations," NDEP Deputy Administrator Colleen Cripps said.

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NDEP Chief, Bureau of Air Pollution Control Michael Elges said, "This regulatory program calls for an aggressive schedule of activities necessary to develop a case-by-case maximum achievable control technology, called MACT for mercury controls in Nevada."

For more information on the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection mercury control program, visit our Web site at <http://ndep.nv.gov/mercury.htm>.

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